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## Job Stressors as a Function of Role Identity Conflict in Women Managers

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JOB STRESSORS AS A FUNCTION OF  
ROLE IDENTITY CONFLICT IN WOMEN MANAGERS

by  
Katherine Borchardt

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## Vita

The author, Katherine (Rogachuk) Borchardt, is the daughter of Theodore Rogachuk and Mary (Strotshuk) Rogachuk. She was born October 13, 1958, in Waukegan, Illinois.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

About 70% of the average person's time during his or her working life is spent in work-related activities (Goldberg, 1978). Work is a psychological and emotional necessity capable of providing satisfaction and a form of self-expression. Increasingly, however, stress on the job is becoming a hindrance to providing full potential satisfaction to workers. Although stress is not always negative or injurious--it can be positive and growth promoting--in this era of increasing governmental and environmental regulations, expanding corporations, changing economic conditions, rapidly changing technology and traditions, increasing decision-making, and an increasing sedentary lifestyle, stress on the job can become more harmful than beneficial, and certainly can occur more frequently. Occupational stress, from this point on associated with negative stressors, is resulting in noxious human and organizational consequences.

There are many human consequences of stress. In 1972 the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, in its "Work in America" study (cited in McLean, 1976, p. 41), stated "that although we are largely ignorant of causal factors, the correlational case history and anecdotal evidence

relating work conditions to both mental and physical problems is too convincing to dismiss." Cooper (1981) found substantial evidence suggesting that occupational stress is a contributing factor to cardiovascular heart disease (CHD). Many researchers believe CHD is related to chronic, unrelieved stress (Albrecht, 1979). The incidence of stress-related diseases such as CHD is on the rise (Davidson & Cooper, 1982). For example, in the late 19th Century the major causes of death included smallpox, typhoid, cholera, tuberculosis, pneumonia, and influenza (United States Department of Commerce [USDC], 1987). These diseases struck without regard to any particular lifestyle. In 1983 people died from diseases that were more chronic and noninfectious. Specifically, the top nine causes of death in 1983, in descending order, were: diseases of the heart, cancer, accidents, stroke and other cerebrovascular diseases, pneumonia, diabetes and suicide, cirrhosis and other liver diseases, and homicide. In addition, one third of all adult males contract high blood pressure, and 10% of all adults in the United States have a peptic ulcer (Frew, 1977). The majority of the top nine causes of death together with high blood pressure and peptic ulcers seem to be directly related to particular lifestyles, and stress is one of the dominant factors affecting the development of these diseases. One study found that 68% of all doctor visits result in diagnosis of illnesses for which no



organic basis can be found ("Worth Repeating," 1981).

Regarding emotional and mental disorders, an estimated 10% of non-institutionalized people in the United States have some form of mental or emotional illness ("Worth Repeating," 1981). In addition, the 1978 President's Commission on Mental Health approximated that 10 to 15% of the population needs or will need mental health services at some point in their lives. Tolman and Rose (1985) have tied stress to mental illness. Ultimately the individual pays for failing to manage stress with death.

The human consequences of occupational stress include not only personal suffering but also lost or reduced income due to absence from the job as a result of illness. The affect of worker's illness on family members is another human consequence of stress, both financially and emotionally. Most human suffering resulting from stress remains unmeasurable and unrecorded.

Along with human consequences of occupational stress are organizational consequences. Stressed employees expose organizations to a variety of direct and indirect costs, but systematic efforts to identify these costs have not been undertaken. However, some organizational consequences have been associated with occupational stress. Specifically, the costs to an organization include: (a) escalating medical and disability claims, (b) rising medical and disability insur-

ance premiums, (c) mounting occupational accidents and injuries, (d) high replacement costs resulting from turnover and premature employee death, (e) increasing downtime resulting from absenteeism and tardiness, (f) substandard job performance, and (g) rising numbers of employee compensation lawsuits and the resultant bad publicity.

Medical and disability expenditures are escalating and most likely are the biggest occupational stress costs to an organization. According to the USDC (1987), in 1985 (the latest year for which figures are available) the national health expenditures were \$425 billion, 10.7% of the GNP, compared with 1980 figures when national health expenditures were 56% lower and only 9.4% of GNP. Of the 1985 national health expenditures \$371.4 billion was spent on personal health care. Insurance premiums cost the private sector \$120.5 billion in 1984 (the latest figure available), some of which is born by industry. The government spent \$165.2 billion in 1985 for health outlays, funded partly by individual and industrial taxes.

Organizations incur costs resulting from disability as well. Industrial and auto accidents are often immediately preceded by work-related stressful events (Quick & Quick, 1979). The total days of disability in 1982 were 3.25 billion, which was 14.3 days lost to disability per capita (USDC, 1987). The number of workers disabled as a result of

work-related illness or injury was 2.9 million in 1985.

Industry bears the cost of disabled workers, mostly through disability compensation or insurance premiums. Medical costs resulting from disability or illness include doctors, hospitals, research, and prescriptions. Approximately 230 million prescriptions are written every year, mostly for fatigue, hypertension, and insomnia--primary symptoms of stress (Frew, 1977).

The costs incurred by an organization due to replacement for premature employee death and permanent disability are difficult to estimate. One estimate places a typical bottom line cost of replacing a non-exempt employee at \$3,500, a key manager at \$50,000, and a president at \$600,000 (Quick & Quick, 1979). Another estimate places the cost of employee turnover at five or more times the lost employee's monthly salary. These costs include the selecting and training processes and the downtime incurred due to the loss of a key employee. Low turnover may be healthy for an organization, especially if it involves unproductive employees leaving and more productive people being added. However, high, unplanned turnover rates (including those people lost due to illnesses, injury, death, and dissatisfaction as a consequence of stress) can be costly.

Related to turnover is the cost due to downtime from increased absenteeism and tardiness of those who are affected

by occupational stress. Individuals may be too physically or emotionally drained from on-the-job stress to have reserves to meet job demands. Some people respond to stress by using alcohol. An estimated 10 million Americans have alcohol-related problems. The consumption of alcohol is 10% higher than it was 10 years ago (USDC, 1987). Cirrhosis of the liver, the number eight cause of death in 1985, is largely caused by alcohol consumption. The annual cost to the nation of alcohol abuse is estimated at \$40 billion (Levi, 1981). Some of this cost is born by industry. This cost includes lost time, health and welfare, property damage, medical expenses, workman's compensation and insurance (Albrecht, 1979). In addition alcoholism may result in below standard job performance and, consequently, higher costs to the organization.

A rapidly rising cost of stress to organizations is the litigation regarding employees' compensation and the resultant negative publicity. Many employees are becoming aware that stress can be a contributing factor in their illnesses, and are striking back in courts with employee compensation suits. The increasing number of these suits is linked to three trends: (a) an increase in medical community beliefs concerning the link between occupational stress and illness, (b) an increase in employee awareness regarding the stress-illness link, and (c) an increase in the number and scope of

state compensation laws (Ivancevich, Matteson, & Richards, 1985).

A growing amount of research has linked work stressors to emotional and physical illnesses (Ivancevich et al., 1985; King & Pave, 1985; McLean, 1976). Some companies do not acknowledge this link, and if they do they do not train their employees to prevent, recognize, or treat stress symptoms because they fear an increase in disability and workman's compensation claims, or a decrease in employee productivity (Bright, 1982). However, the average stress-related workman's compensation claimant was 38.3 years old in 1984 (King & Pave, 1985). The young average age may prove to be costly to organizations because younger people may be more prone to view their emotional problems as compensable injuries due to the new notoriety of stress research. They have also been brought up in an era where the stigma associated with mental illness has decreased, allowing them to be more vocal about their mental illnesses or behavioral disorders.

Companies can no longer afford to ignore work-related stress issues. Insurers tend to treat job stress as a compensable injury or illness. In addition, states and courts are more open-minded than insurance companies in their judgments and awards to those stricken with occupational stress-related illnesses. However, because most states have not adopted legislation regarding this issue, states are incon-

sistent with each other concerning judgments and awards. Tracing the cause-effect relationship between occupational stress and injury is difficult and workman's compensation claims are being decided on a state-by-state basis with varying degrees of leniency. The trend with stress-related workman's compensation claims is toward increasing, liberal judgments and awards (Ivancevich et al., 1985). Fifteen states (including California and New York) award workman's compensation for mental claims. These claims have tripled from 1980 to 1984 (King & Pave, 1985). The National Council on Compensation Insurance found that mental stress claims jumped from 2.5% of all occupational disease claims in the 1970's to 14.9% in 1984 (omitting chronic diseases such as cancer) (Ivancevich et al., 1985). It is unknown how many actual stress claims are filed.

Organizations cannot ignore the trend towards workman's compensation suits regarding stress illnesses and injuries. They must monitor case law and prevent occupational stress to avoid litigation expenses and costs resulting from medical claims, medical insurance premiums, turnover, and downtime. The truth of the matter is the exact cost of stress-induced illnesses and injuries to organizations is not known. However, judging from the fact that national and personal health care expenditures are rising, the top nine causes of death are related to lifestyle, the number one cause of death is

a stress-related disease, and workman's compensation suits are mounting, it can be assumed that the expenses resulting from stress-related diseases are rising and costing consumers and government more. One study estimated stress-induced diseases cost the nation's industry up to \$60 billion (Yates, 1979). If Alcoa cut its medical cost by 10% it could have doubled its 1983 profit (Wardrop, 1984).

It is becoming apparent that occupational stress can be costly to the employer, the employee, the employee's family, and the country (through increased consumer prices passed down from organizations' increasing health costs, and increasing government taxes because of rising government health care expenditures).

On a more specific level, the quantitative research relating to occupational stress and managers is scarce, and even more scarce is research regarding women's occupational stress. However, in the last 20 years a more systematic effort by social scientists to study managerial occupational stress has occurred. Stress research before 1950 was based on assessment work in crisis situations such as wars, major illnesses, and bereavement (Cooper & Marshall, 1977). Between 1950 and 1970 the majority of stress research was restricted to the organizational needs and not looked at from an employee point of view. Since then managerial stress research has drawn from a larger body of research and theory

from the fields of medicine, psychology, sociology and management science. Currently there are over 40 interacting factors which have been associated with managerial stress. However, there is no integrated conceptual framework in the field of managerial stress. The framework of this thesis is an attempt to coordinate the recent research in the area of managerial occupational stress, especially as it relates to female managers.

Women have increased their participation in the labor force to 44.2% in 1985 (USDC, 1987). Women's increased participation has been attributed to a variety of technological and social changes. New methods of birth control have helped couples and single women plan the timing and size of families. Convenience products such as automatic dishwashers and microwave ovens, which are also labor-saving devices, have made the care of families easier.

Social policy contributed to women's entry into the labor market as well. The government has pressured industry to give women consideration in employment and promotion decisions. In addition, the women's liberation movement rallied women to seek new careers.

Though women have steadily increased their share in the labor market, their inroads into management occupations have been slow (USDC, 1987). In 1985 women held only 25% of managerial positions. Women who worked full time earned only 70%



of men in 1986 ("More Gains," 1987). The lack of upward mobility and lower pay as compared to men have been sources of stress for women managers.

The increase of women into management has been accompanied by a rise in stress-related diseases for women. Death from cardiovascular disease, lung cancer, and ulcers has been increasing in women and has been attributed to the increasing exposure of women to occupational stress as their participation in the workforce has increased (Davidson & Cooper, 1982).

Additional occupational stressors occur for women on top of those that exist for both sexes. Those additional stressors will be enumerated in this thesis as the literature regarding women's occupational stress is reviewed. Particular attention will be paid to women's role conflict as a stressor. One of the biggest stressors women face today are the culturally conditioned stereotypes surrounding role traits. It is difficult for many women to "internalize role concepts of what the contemporary woman should act like. This is comparatively easy to incorporate into verbal communications, but reconciling changes to conditioned role perceptions is another matter" (Forbes, 1979, p.59). Women face pressures from cultural, family and business expectations regarding their feminine/female roles. They also experience conflict as they go against the "traditional" female

lifestyle of mother and homemaker. As they work in the business world women will need to overcome stereotypes and expectations of traditional role-related behavior. To add insult to injury, women seldom have a role model to follow. As a result of occupational and role stress, there is evidence that women may not immediately accept the opportunity to enter the labor market when it becomes available (Davies, 1980).

Future areas for research regarding occupational stress, especially as they pertain to women managers and women managers' role conflict will be suggested at the end of this thesis.

## Chapter II

### Definition of Stress and Health Consequences

Stress has been erroneously associated with pressure. Stress is not pressure; nor is it nervous tension. According to endocrinologist Dr. Hans Selye (1974), the first person to have a major impact on stress research, stress is the state manifested by a specific syndrome which consists of all the non-specifically induced changes within a biological system. In other words,, stress is the sum of all the non-specific responses of the body to any demands made upon it. It is the whole organism's response to good or bad change. Therefore, not all stress is unpleasant. Stress can be constructive by creating conditions for learning and stimulation. Additionally, human beings need a certain level of stress in the form of environmental stimulation to function optimally. This stimulation must not be too high, causing prolonged excitement and tension, nor too low resulting in boredom. Each person has a stress comfort zone (Albrecht, 1979). Pleasant experiences at a sufficiently high level can produce the same combination of symptoms as negative stressors. It is the intensity of the experience that produces stress.

Stressors cause the stress response, according to Selye (1974). Whether a stressor is perceived as being successful

as an optimal stimulus depends on the individual and the surrounding circumstances. One person's negative stressor can be another's positive stimulus. Newman and Beehr (1979) concluded that individuals may react and cope differently to the same stressor. They also concluded that an individual may react and cope differently to the same stressor on different occasions. Some stress research has indicated that the differentiating factors between those who are successful in handling stress and those who are not are individual vulnerabilities, sensitivity to internal reactions, awareness of situational stress potential, and ability to appropriately respond (Levi, 1967). Individual vulnerabilities include biochemical makeup, emotional characteristics, social roles, and personal values, attitudes, and habits. Vulnerability alters with age, occupation, and education.

A large amount of research has been done on the individual differences of vulnerability associated with stress-related diseases, especially cardiovascular heart disease (CHD). The principle direction of research in this area centers on the relationship between stress- or coronary-prone behavior patterns and the incidence of disease. Friedman and Rosenman (1974) showed a relationship between behavior patterns and the prevalence of CHD. Individuals with certain behavior traits were shown to be significantly more at risk to CHD. These individuals were referred to as exhibiting

the coronary-prone behavior pattern Type A. Type B individuals exhibit behaviors associated with a lower risk of CHD. The Type A person exhibits an overt behavior syndrome or style of living that is characterized by (a) extreme competitiveness, (b) aggressiveness, (c) haste, (d) impatience, (e) restlessness, (f) hyperalertness, (g) speech explosiveness, and (h) facial musculature tenseness. Other characteristics include feeling time pressure, striving for achievement, and finishing others' sentences prematurely (Cooper & Payne, 1980). Type A people overcommit themselves to their work to the extent that other aspects of their lives suffer. People with Type A behavior patterns exhibit the Horatio-Alger complex in the sense that they believe their style of living is largely responsible for their accomplishments, and that changing their lifestyle will decrease their income, power, and prestige. However, the Type A lifestyle actually hinders socioeconomic progress rather than furthers it (Executive Health Examiners, 1985).

The Type A behavior pattern was supported by the Western Collaborative Group Study as one that precedes CHD (Rosenman, Brand, Sholtz, & Friedman, 1976). Additionally, Rosenman, Friedman, and Strauss (1964) studied people with Type A behavior patterns postmortem and found that coronary deaths were approximately six times more common in this group than in those with the Type B behavior pattern (characterized

by little or no time or deadline consciousness, a marked lack of competitive instinct, and a greater degree of contentment with their lives).

The context in which an interaction takes place also affects whether an individual is successful in handling stress, as it relates to individual reactions (McLean, 1976). The context may be social, physical, or environmental. An individual must be particularly vulnerable or be in a threatening environment to be a medium for which a specific stressor produces symptoms. McLean builds upon this model of stress. Referring to the behavioral and medical problems associated with unmanaged stress as the "symptomatic response," McLean suggests that this association varies in intensity according to the relationship between three key variables: (a) an individual's personal vulnerability at a given point in time, (b) the environment in which the person is operating, and (c) the strength and nature of a particular stressor. Context, vulnerability, and stressors are in constant, fluid motion. They each vary symbolically in size. The more they overlap symbolically, the more they produce symptoms. To reduce symptoms the overlap between context, vulnerability, and stressors need to be manipulated.

Individuals respond to stress with the stress response syndrome, according to Selye (1976). Just as stress prepared primitive man and prepares animals to confront and fight

their enemy, or run away, stress in modern life helps people to "fight" or to exhibit "flight." Stress sets into motion an alarm stage which functions as a heightened response from which an individual can meet the challenge. This alarm stage, or fight-or-flight response, has become an internalized feeling for humans. If it is not used for its intended purpose it can become a major source of distress. If the stress response is fired off too often or persists for a long period physical bodies remain in a continued state of alarm. Selye's definition of an alarm reaction is an initial shock phase of lowered resistance followed by countershock when the individual's defense mechanisms become activated. The defense mechanisms include the pituitary gland, which stimulates adrenal glands and their subsequent release of corticosteroids. Corticosteroids, in turn, constrict blood vessels, raise blood pressure, increase breathing rates and cause the gastrointestinal system to produce more acid (Kinzer, 1979). Corticosteroids also raise white blood cell count, affecting some immune and allergic reactions (Cooper, 1983).

Resistance is the next of Selye's (1976) stress response stages. Resistance is the stage of maximum adaptation and a return to equilibrium, if successful. However, if the stress continues or the defense does not work, the individual will move into the third phase of the stress response called

exhaustion. Exhaustion is when the adaptive mechanisms collapse.

According to Selye (1976), the body is capable of returning to a normal state after stressful episodes if it has time to recuperate. Unfortunately we are often exposed to many prolonged stressors with no time to recover. Stress is also cumulative; the more frequent the stressors occur or the longer they last, the more risk of a stress-related disease moving from an acute to a chronic condition. Selye attributes diseases such as CHD, high blood pressure, psychiatric disturbances, bronchial maladies, kidney disease, migraines, tuberculosis and gastrointestinal malfunctions to stress. Stress can further impair the body's immune system, which can then lead to individual susceptibility to infectious and viral diseases. According to Selye stress is also a major factor in aging. Each stressful event leaves behind irreversible wear and tear scars. Aging is the sum of all bodily stress exposures, and can prevent human beings from realizing biological potential.

It is common knowledge that stress can influence the cause and exacerbation of diseases. Along with Selye others have linked stress to physical and emotional symptoms and illnesses. These links will be discussed in more depth later in this chapter. Table 1 reviews research supporting these links.



Stressors can be classified in many ways. Davidson & Cooper (1982) criticize Selye's model of stress because it is a simple stimulus-response model. Some researchers feel that stressor effects are partially dependent on other factors such as environmental conditions, individual interpretations of events, and the person-environment fit (Davidson & Cooper, 1982; Friedman & Rosenman, 1974; Holmes & Rahe, 1967; Lazarus, 1966; McLean, 1976). In addition, the effects of physical and environmental stressors can be specific, rather than general and systemic. Selye's (1976) General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) may "risk becoming vague, overinclusive and beyond the realm of analytical scientific research" (Hamberger & Lohr, 1984, p. 1). Additionally, stressors can be psychological or social in nature as well as physical survival threats. The fight or flight response can be elicited by imagined threats to self-esteem or security. Our physical and emotional reactions, such as anxiety and guilt, can be stressors as well (Davidson & Cooper, 1982).

One modern theory of stress that tries to improve on Selye's model revolves around the effects of dramatic life changes. Holmes and Rahe (1967) suggested that stress comes from life events. According to Holmes and Rahe the greater the life changes and consequent burden of stress, the lower the body's resistance to disease, and the more serious the illness that develops. Holmes and Rahe developed a predic-

Table 1

Research Supporting the Stress and Symptom/Illness Link

Symptom	Illness	Study
Thinking difficulty		Cooper & Payne,
Rigidity of views		1980
Social withdrawal		
Inappropriate aggression		
Excessive smoking		
Inability to relax		
Excessive drinking		
	High blood pressure	•Friedman &
	Heart disease	Rosenman, 1974
Muscle tension	Cancer	Yates, 1979
	Ulcers	
	Diabetes	
	Backaches	
	Migraines	
	Allergies	
	Arthritis	
Tachychardia	Hypoglycemia	Hamberger & Lohr,
Hyperventilation	Skin disorders	1984
Sleep disturbances	Colitis	

(table continues)

Symptom	Illness	Study
Depression		McLeroy, Green,
Low self-esteem		Mullen, &
		Foslee, 1984
Insomnia		Quick & Quick,
Stomach complaints		1979
Depression		
Job dissatisfaction		
General fatigue		
Social withdrawal		Cooper, 1981
Aggression		
Irritability		
Excessive alcohol use		
Tachychardia	Ulcers	Epstein, 1970
Hyperventilation	Diabetes	
Fatigue	Hypoglycemia	
	Skin disorders	
	Colitis	

tive assessment (The Social Readjustment Rating Scale) of stress overload. They examined a large number of medical case histories, looking for a relationship between major health problems and life experiences (and the extent to which people must change and adapt to these life experiences). They assigned a point value to life's major experiences and concluded that, after adding up point values, those people scoring over a certain number of points have a major risk of a health breakdown. They explained further that the life experiences in their assessment tool are not all negative. There are positive life experiences, such as a promotion or a holiday, which can be stress-producing. Ironically, many people react to positive life experiences, such as a promotion, by adding stress-producing experiences such as buying more expensive appliances and items (thus increasing their debt--another stressor according to Holmes and Rahe) (Cooper & Payne, 1980).

Critics of the Holmes-Rahe theory of stress include those that are proponents of a more holistic view of stress. The Holmes-Rahe Social Readjustment Rating Scale does not account for individual capabilities for meeting and/or dealing with stress. The individual's vulnerability and the circumstances associated with the life events can cause demands to vary as to whether they cause a person to experience stress. Vulnerability and context also vary in the

degree or magnitude of stress they produce in a person.

Today there is a movement towards viewing stress as an interactive process. This interactionist thinking was proposed by Lazarus (1966), who has formulated a cognitive appraisal and psychological stress concept. Stress is not seen as a demand-response capability, but as an imbalance between perceived demand and perceived response capacity (Davidson & Cooper, 1982). The failure to meet demands and anticipate consequences results in psychological stress, according to Lazarus. Individuals can alter stress by (a) avoiding the consequences; (b) fulfilling the demands at a tolerable cost; or (c) altering the perception of demand, capabilities, or consequences.

Later, Lazarus and Launier (1981) formulated a cognitive, or phenomenological model of stress. This model perceives the individual in a transactional relationship with the environment. When there is a person-environment fit, coping is taking place. There are two kinds of person-environment fit: the extent to which an individual's attributes match the requirements of his or her environment, and the extent to which the environment matches the needs of the individual. Misfit of either kind threatens the well-being of the individual. Additionally, the individual uses a process of appraisal by means of a "how am I doing" set of questions after which he or she makes appraisals about the

adequacy of coping mechanisms used. Therefore the effects of stress are determined by how an individual appraises (based on a constellation of ideas and expectations) and adapts to an event.

Lazarus (1981) also suggests that daily hassles as stressors have an effect on health. The impact of hassles depends on the frequency and magnitude of them. Hassles may originate in a person's characteristic style, the environment, or in the person-environment interaction (Tolman & Rose, 1985). Hassles may tax coping reserves and lead to vulnerabilities when dealing with major undesirable events. Hassles include events such as interrupting phone calls, bounced checks, or lost keys.

The cognitive approach to stress builds on Lazarus' model of stress. Situations themselves do not cause stress. However, emotional stress immediately follows what individuals tell themselves about the situation (Executive Health Examiners, 1985). The Executive Health Examiners said they have "never seen anyone in a coma feel tense. We have to think to feel" (p. 289). People respond to the messages they tell themselves. These messages are often erroneous and illogical, based on many false assumptions, causing stress as a result. Typically there are two types of faulty thinking patterns: black-and-white thinking, which can lead to anger; and catastrophic thinking, which can blow things out of pro-

portion. Others who support the cognitive model of stress are Apply and Trumbull (cited in Hamberger & Lohr, 1984), who include such variables as motivation, response availability, response opportunity, response repertoire, and timing effects as mitigators of cognitions. Although support exists for the mediating role of cognitions in psychological stress, the exact nature of the link between cognitive processes, adaptational behavior, and physiological outcomes is, as of yet, obscure.

Three factors seem to moderate the amount of stress any demand causes for a person (Cooper & Payne, 1980). The first is predictability or uncertainty. When individuals are able to predict an event they can take steps to manage or prepare for it. When an individual is unprepared it can be extremely stressful, especially if the event is shocking. Predictability, therefore, minimizes the amount and magnitude of stress. Frankenhouser (cited in Cooper & Payne, 1980) suggested that uncertain and unpredictable situations produce an adrenaline response that diminishes when uncertainty decreases.

Control is another factor that mitigates the effect of stress. Control is related to predictability. Part of the stress-producing properties of unpredictable or uncertain events is a lack of control. However, another side of control is when individuals do know what will happen and cannot

do the necessary things to meet the demand. An individual may know what a solution to the problem is, yet can be powerless to control the people or events that would help the resolution. Without control people cannot really manage stress, only absorb it.

The third factor that moderates stress is value. A person may feel pressure associated with activities towards a valued or satisfying goal, but the pressure will not be as stressful as the pressure associated with activities towards a goal which is not valued.

After nearly forty years of research and conceptualization a universally acceptable definition of stress has yet to be formulated. However, the stress response does not discriminate in its effect between men and women (Nelson & Quick, 1985). There may be sex-related predispositions resulting in higher incidences of disorders of one type between men and women. But both sexes seem to be equally susceptible to the consequences of stress.

More research has been conducted revealing stress as a factor in the progression of physical and mental illnesses (Frew, 1977), than on the definition of stress. Although most researchers agree that stress brings on an increased generalized susceptibility to illness, very few links have been found proving any direct relationship between stress and specific diseases. However, indirect links have been estab-



lished. There can be little doubt about the negative impact of stress on the body. At the very least stress provides a serious complicating effect upon illnesses.

Nearly one million Americans die each year from CHD. This disease results in about 55% of all deaths (Yates, 1979). In the last few years almost 700,000 Americans have died annually of heart attacks, one third of these deaths among people under 65. Only recently has the relationship between this number one cause of death and stress been recognized. Friedman and Rosenman (1974) and Selye (1976) provided evidence of a direct relationship between heart disease and stress. Additionally, Selye has proven in laboratory experiments that heart accidents can be induced chemically by excessive stress (Yates, 1979).

Similarly, between 23 and 44 million Americans currently suffer from high blood pressure. It is the cause of around 60,000 deaths per year and is considered a major contributing factor to heart disease. Someone with high blood pressure is four times more likely to have a heart attack or stroke as is someone with normal or low blood pressure. Scientists are uncertain as to its cause. However, stress has been implicated as a cause of high blood pressure. There are some questions about just how much of a factor it is in the origin of high blood pressure. Many researchers now believe that stress is the primary cause of high blood pres-

sure (Albrecht, 1979). When the body is stressed it responds instantly by raising blood pressure to rush an oversupply of blood to vital parts of the body (Yates, 1979). Even when the stress has disappeared the pressure may not drop all the way back to normal. Each time this reaction occurs, the pressure may drop by smaller amounts, eventually stabilizing at a permanently high level.

Stress has also been linked to cancer, although the evidence is inconclusive. Leshan (cited in Yates, 1979) studied 450 cancer patients for 12 years. They had three psychological characteristics in common more frequently than a control group of people not suffering from cancer.

First, most of the patients had lost a significant close personal relationship before the disease was identified (and presumably before its onset). Second, almost half was characterized as having an inability to vent hostile feelings towards others. Third, one-third displayed a high level of preoccupation concerning the death of a parent even when the death had occurred some time ago. This gives credence to Holmes-Rahe's theory of stress.

The stress-cancer link is receiving more attention by scientific research. One study examined chickens whose pecking order was disrupted. These chickens were eight times more likely to get cancer than those whose order remained intact (Yates, 1979).

The stress-cancer link needs more research to be established. The link may be due to another variable such as the fact that stress may cause general susceptibility to illness.

Stress has also been associated with gastrointestinal disturbances, such as ulcers. Gastric and duodenal ulcers occur far more often in people who are always tense than in those who are not. Constant stress keeps the gastric system working full-time unnecessarily (Yates, 1979).

Stress and diabetes have also been linked. The predisposition to diabetes may be inherited, but whether latent diabetes develops into the full blown disease depends on many factors, including the way the body reacts to stress. Normally the blood sugar level is higher when a person is under stress. When it is prolonged, the pancreas, tired from the burden on it, finally fails to produce enough insulin. There is plenty of evidence connecting diabetes with stress, and demonstrating that a diabetes condition worsens under stress (Yates, 1979).

Backaches and headaches are two common results of stress. Migraines are caused by dilated blood vessels in the head. After stressful situations, when blood vessels are constricted, blood vessels dilate past normal size quickly, causing a migraine. Likewise, most cases of back pain are caused by muscular tension from prolonged tightening of muscles or weakness from sedentary habits (Yates, 1979).

The quantitative analysis of the-biochemical changes characterizing particular forms of stress is difficult (Cooper & Payne, 1980). Part of this issue results from the fact that whether any ill symptoms or diseases appear may be due to individual make-up (Yates, 1979). Since 1970 however, new ambulatory monitors have been developed that simultaneously record the electrocardiogram (EKG), the electroencephalogram (EEG), blood pressure, and a fourth channel of information which combines time, temperature, and an event marker. "It is by combining these biochemical and physiological measures of the responses to stress that one can take theories relating occupational stress to heart disease out of the realm of anecdote and subjective impression to the realms of objective scientific observations" (Cooper & Payne, 1980, p. 10).

This chapter reviewed stress and stress consequences in general terms. The next chapter examines current literature regarding occupational stress, specifically as it relates to managers.

## Chapter III

### Managerial Occupational Stress

"Job stress refers to a situation wherein job-related factors interact with the worker to change (i.e., disrupt or enhance) his or her psychological and/or physiological condition such that the person (i.e., mind-body) is forced to deviate from normal functioning" (Newman & Beehr, 1979, p. 1.). Although the study of the cause-effect relationship and process of occupational stress is incomplete, many researchers believe the phenomenon of job stress exists. Job stress has been linked with employee withdrawal behaviors, such as absenteeism and turnover (Gupta & Beehr, 1979). French and Caplan (cited in Quick & Quick, 1979) found job stress to be associated with job dissatisfaction. Work-related stressors have also been found to immediately precede industrial, auto and domestic accidents (Quick & Quick, 1979).

The literature cites many causes of occupational stress. Although the stressors discussed in this chapter can apply to workers as a whole, the primary focus will be on their application to managers. In general, the causes of managerial or white collar stress can be divided into six broad categories.

### Role-Related Occupational Stressors

One well researched category of managerial work stress involves an individual's role in an organization. Role stress can be subdivided into role ambiguity, role conflict, and role status conflict. Role ambiguity results partly from an individual being unclear about his superiors', subordinates', and other relevant people's expectations concerning his or her role responsibilities and activities (McLean, 1970). There may also be inadequate information concerning goals and means towards those goals which the activities of the role are to be directed. A related concept involves the uncertainty surrounding expectations of the role style the occupant must exhibit--the sort of person he or she must be when performing his or her role. These expectations may be based on individual perceptions.

The stressfulness of role ambiguity, and ambiguity in general, lies in that it frustrates an individual's need for structure, control, and certainty in his/her environment (McLean, 1970). As a result, the individual will try to overcompensate for the ambiguity by overdoing the job to make sure he or she is fulfilling everyone's possible, perceivable expectations, resulting in job overload or burnout.

Role ambiguity has been empirically linked to stress. Kahn et al. (cited in Frieze, Parsons, Johnson, Ruble, & Zellman, 1978) indicated that higher levels of ambiguity were

related to a high degree of job-related tension. In addition, others have found a relationship between role ambiguity and mental health problems (Beehr & Newman, 1978; Cooper & Marshall, 1976; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980).

Role conflict is the "simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that, even if the role occupant has infinite resources at his or her disposal, compliance with one expectation makes compliance with another more difficult or impossible" (McLean, 1970, p. 71). The expectations can be self-imposed or imposed by others. Role conflict and stress symptoms increase the more diverse and extensive a person's interpersonal communication network becomes (Cooper, 1981; Cooper & Marshall, 1977). An extensive communication network is exemplified by a manager whose role is at a boundary. Such a boundary might include a role that is between departments or between the company and the outside world.

Kahn et al. (cited in Frieze et al., 1978) found that men who suffered more role conflict had lower job satisfaction and higher job tension. They also found that the greater the power or authority of the people sending the conflicting role messages, the more role conflict resulted in job dissatisfaction and physiological strain. Additionally, role conflict has been associated the CHD (Cooper & Marshall, 1977).

Lack of status is another role stress (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980), and is associated with role conflict. Role conflict relating to status is generated when incompatible expectations (an individual's own or those of referent others) of a social position result (Cooper & Marshall, 1977). Jackson (cited in Cooper & Marshall, 1977) found that all forms of status inconsistency are psychologically disturbing, but response to stress varies with relative positions of the inconsistent person's achieved and ascribed status ranks..

#### Stressors Due to Organizational Structure and Climate

Another category of managerial work-related stress may be an organization's structure and climate. These organizational stressors are too numerous to review. However, the more researched areas of organizational stress related to climate and structure follows.

If an organization is humanized and people-oriented, individuals will have an increased sense of belonging. Those who do not have this sense of belonging may feel some alienation and stress as a result (Levi, 1981).

Related to a humanized organizational environment is how much an organization allows for employee participation in decision-making. Those who are given a chance for participation in decision-making feel more committed towards those activities in which they participate and towards the organiza-



tion as a whole (Cooper, 1981). If workers are requested sincerely to voice opinions or to provide input, greater commitment to a working situation will usually result, provided that request is sincere and acted upon. Insincere requests may lead to decreased productivity because workers may feel as if nothing they do or say matters. A lack of participation in task-oriented activities, meetings and policies will result in decreased commitment by workers, and an increase in stress. Non-participation in decision-making was found by Margolis et al. (1974) to be a consistent and significant predictor of job-related stress. French and Caplan (1970) found a link between greater opportunities for participation in decision-making and greater job satisfaction and higher self-esteem. Non-participation has also been found to be associated with poor physical health, depression, low self-esteem, drinking, low job satisfaction, low motivation to work, intention to leave a job, and absenteeism (Cooper, 1981).

Another potential source of management stress in an organization's structure and climate is the potential conflict between the individual's and the organization's practices, values, beliefs, and needs. For example, if an individual uses a more efficient process which is not in line with standard procedures to complete a task, conflict-induced stress may occur if the organization requires strict adher-

ence to its standard policies which do not dictate using the individual's process.

Long hours can be stressful (Executive Health Examiners, 1985). If work is enjoyable and provides freedom of time and judgement from immediate supervision, an individual will most likely not become ill. A balanced life will counteract the effects of working long hours (Cooper & Marshall, 1977). However, research has shown the more one works, the higher the death rate from CHD. A study of 45 workers in light industry who work more than 48 hours per week shows twice the risk of CHD than those employees working 40 or less hours per week.

Lastly, job design can be a stressor, especially for managers. Managers' jobs are often poorly defined and varied. According to Henry Mintzberg (1973), the manager's workday is usually fragmented and frequently interrupted. Additionally, Mintzberg defined 10 obligatory management roles (see Table 2). Managers tend to work at such an unrelenting pace that they are unable to escape from their jobs, even after hours.

#### Stressors Intrinsic to the Job

A third major category of managerial job stress describes stressors which evolve from elements intrinsic to the job itself. One such intrinsic factor is quantitative or qualitative work overload or underload. This factor can

Table 2

Management Roles

Roles	Role Description
The Figurehead	Carries out social, inspirational legal, and ceremonial duties
The Leader	Motivates, activates, hires, trains promotes, and terminates workers
The Liason	Accesses all subordinates and outside contacts
The Monitor	Seeks and receives internal and external information
The Disseminator	Assimilates, integrates, interprets and sends internal and external information appropriately
The Spokesperson	Transmits the organization's plans policies, and actions to outsiders
The Entrepreneur	Initiates and designs projects
The Disturbance Handler	Manages conflict
The Resource Allocator	Distributes organizational resources
The Negotiator	Bargains with and for other units

result from, among others, role ambiguity, lack of time management (includes lack of delegation), and actually having too much or too little to do. Overload and underload are a function of an individual's capabilities and personality. They can be internally imposed. In defining an optimum between overload and underload three factors need to be considered:

1. People prefer moderate levels of stimulation.
2. People prefer moderate levels of predictability in both space and time in their stimulation.
3. People prefer a moderate degree of conflict (Yates, 1979).

Sensory stimulation, novelty, and conflict all tend to raise arousal level, while monotonous uniformity, predictability, and concordance tend to lower it. It is also well recognized that performance tends to be best at intermediate levels of arousal: the organism is insensitive and inert if the level is too low, and tense and disorganized if it is too high (p. 32).

An example of work overload may be business travel. Overnight business travel causes fatigue, uncertainty in a new environment, and returning to a large volume of accumulated work.

French and Caplan (cited in Quick & Quick, 1979) found quantitative and qualitative overload are characterized by

increased job dissatisfaction, high job tension, and a rising heart rate. Overload also produces a reduction in performance, lowered confidence, irritability, poor judgment, fatigue, insomnia, and strained interpersonal relationships (Keenan & McBain, 1979).

Having to be evaluated is another intrinsic job factor which can cause stress. All workers must be evaluated in order to ensure proper striving towards organizational goals and objectives. Performance appraisals cause stress with regard to effectiveness and equity of the whole process, and because they are the basis upon which many pay and promotion decisions are made (Quick & Quick, 1979). Evaluation can serve as both a barrier and an opportunity to advancement, and serves as a comparison with others, which can therefore be stressful (Levi, 1967). How a person is evaluated plays a part in determining whether a stressful situation will occur. Feedback is most helpful if it is clear, specific, timely, preserves self-esteem, and is job oriented rather than personality oriented. Not being evaluated can cause a state of uncertainty and ambiguity, resulting in frustration and stress. Additionally, performance appraisals may be stressful for managers because some managers feel they are assuming a God-like role. The defensive behaviors of the employees may create stress for the evaluating manager as well (Nelson & Quick, 1985).

Time pressures and deadlines cause problems for many managers. Time pressures can arise from having too much to do or from mismanagement of time. Time pressures are great for the manager because he or she must allocate time among his or her many roles, give time to subordinates, superiors, and peers, and respond to interrupting phone calls and drop-in visitors.

Another major stressor related to intrinsic job factors is change. As organizations grow larger and more dynamic change occurs more often. Managers must then deal with change on a constant basis. Organizations are more subject to change recently due to increasing technology, environmental changes, more governmental regulations, and an increasing unionization. Rapid change can lead to uncertainty about the organization's or industry's future, and therefore the employee's. Change includes some measure of loss and uncertainty, and the resultant resistance from individuals who work for the organization. McLean (1970) believes that all stressors appear to involve change in some way.

An example of how change affects managers is the change inherent in transfers. This change results in rootlessness (Annstead, 1978). Transfers cut down on the number of close friends and community involvements available to a transient family. Transfers also involve breakups of friendships due to long distance. Executives, on the average, move more than

10 times during their careers, with some companies having a policy to transfer their executives every three to four years.

### Career Development Stressors

Improper career development is another category of managerial occupational stress. Improper career development can lead to job dissatisfaction and a high stress situation (Levi, 1967). Part of insufficient career development is underpromotion or overpromotion, which lead to inefficient and unproductive use of human resources. Kasl (1973) found that unfair or inappropriate promotional opportunities led to increased mental health problems. The stress of under-promotion or over-promotion may result from an improper person-environment fit (Lazarus & Launier, 1981). A mismatch occurs when the capabilities, skills, and needs of the individual do not match the demands and opportunities available on the job. Over- or under-utilization of skills and capabilities of the individual is counterproductive.

Improper career development that results in stress can also be found in lack of career direction (McLeroy et al., 1984), lack of preparation or training for a specific job (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980), and thwarted ambition (Cooper & Marshall, 1977).

Somewhat related to improper career development as a stressor are age and retirement factors. As a person ap-

proaches retirement he or she may feel stressed, especially if the organization has a mandatory retirement age and the individual does not want to retire. Older age can also lead to job insecurity or fear of losing a job to younger, more skilled or able (in terms of physical health) workers.

### Interpersonal Support Stressors

Interpersonal relationships and support make up the fifth broad category of managerial job stressors. An individual can be placed with an employer, superiors, subordinates, or peers who are incompetent, or with whom the individual clashes. The individual can be subjected to criticism from all four groups of people, and can be in numerous conflict situations with these groups. Some people have a hard time subordinating themselves to someone else's will, especially if that other person is unfair or unlikeable.

Additionally, a work environment that lacks support is stressful because it leaves a person looking for direction and feedback. If a supportive learning environment is not fostered a resulting misuse of potential worker efficiency and productivity may result. Support is important in mitigating stress by delivering assistance from others. Work groups perform several functions: (a) contact with others, (b) social comparison (hence a reduction in ambiguity), (c) development of norms (resulting in a reduction of uncertainty), (d) assistance in obtaining goals, and (e) meeting needs



for variety, stimulation, and achievement (Moss, 1981).

People with a high level of support from either superiors or peers generally report low role conflict, low role ambiguity, high participation, and good utilization of their skills (Moss, 1981). In addition the relationship between group cohesiveness and lack of mental health problems has been shown (Cooper & Marshall, 1976; Martin, 1984). Social support can also moderate the effects of life events on mental health (Thoits, 1982). Additionally, marginal social status or membership in a low-status group or minority is linked with health risks and a high rate of mental impairment (Moss, 1981).

#### Extraorganizationally-Caused Stressors

The last major category of managerial occupational stress is extraorganizationally-caused stressors. The list of these is large, but some of the most commonly found in the literature include the following:

1. Contemporary economic problems, such as the energy crisis, inflation, unemployment rates, and economic growth, all which affect attitudes, confidence, and outlook.

2. High standards of living, creating the stress of "keeping up with the Joneses" or with current or past standards.

3. High educational opportunities, resulting in recent college graduates' increasing inability to utilize their edu-

cation due to competition with each other for job openings.

4. Increasing governmental regulations.

5. Rapidly evolving technology, making it harder for people to keep up with knowledge and new skills required.

6. Changing family structure to dual career, nuclear families, increasing the stress resulting from questions over allocation of resources, time and career commitment (Cooper & Marshall, 1976).

7. Life events (Holmes & Rahe, 1967).

8. Passing life stages, such as middle age or starting a family.

9. Urban commuting, especially when it is under crowded conditions, takes much time, and is difficult to control (Yates, 1979).

The different stressors managers undergo are numerous. Unfortunately women managers have additional stressors which they are subjected to that seem to be by virtue of their sex only. The next chapter will summarize managerial women's occupational stressors.

## Chapter IV

### Managerial Women's Occupational Stressors

From early American days the number of women who have been employed has been increasing. Colonial women were responsible for the production of food, services, and goods, and for bearing and raising children. Many of these women also were employed outside the home. Most of the women who worked away from home were low-income, young, and single women (Fox & Barber, 1984). As society was transformed from a rural society to an urban one, women increased their work-force participation. Men were largely still occupied heavily in the agrarian area, and women worked in industry. These women were white and single (Sherman & Denmark, 1978). This work for women was considered temporary until they married.

At the turn of the 20th Century the economy grew and the middle class became wealthier (Fox & Barber, 1984). Previously, only the wealthy women stayed home. Now more middle-class women worked at home, and only lower middle-class and working-class women worked, usually in the factory. World War I brought new opportunities for women who filled in for the occupationally-missing military men. This trend was reversed during the Depression, and then reversed again during World War II. Until World War II, working women were in

unskilled, low-paying jobs. The movement of women into the labor force became irreversible after World War II (Sherman & Denmark, 1978). More older and married women, and then younger mothers entered the workforce (Fox & Barber, 1984).

The reasons for the increase of women's participation in the work force are clear. The advent of birth control made family and career planning easier and more flexible. The new "kitchen technology" made home care and food preparation less time consuming and more convenient. The women's liberation movement of the seventies changed society's attitudes toward women's right to pursue a career. Finally, divorce, inflation,, and the recession made women's participation in paid labor a necessity (Witkin-Lanoil, 1984). Additionally, there are psychological reasons why women like to work. Working can provide social contact, escape valves from the home, adult conversation, intellectual stimulation, and an increase in self-esteem. Professional women tend to have higher self-esteem and better mental health than homemakers (Cooper & Davidson, 1982).

However, despite great gains into the labor market, women still face many occupational barriers and segregation. Women occupy low-paying jobs where their career move options and influence are limited (Fox & Barber, 1984). The type of jobs women occupy is mostly service oriented--elementary education, library, clerical, and private household work

(Sherman & Denmark, 1978). Even though during the past decade college women's degree aspirations and career plans have changed to less traditional female occupations, there is still a great deal of sex-typing of jobs. If the occupation is labelled as "female" or has a high proportion of females in it, salaries and status are low, even in those occupations where career path, skill, and education are the same for men and women. Additionally, according to theories of occupational development, women's careers are characterized by interruptions due to marriage, pregnancy, and child-rearing. Occupational sex-typing may occur because female jobs permit women to enter, leave, and reenter as needed, and allow women to maintain the dual roles of homemaker and worker.

In addition to occupational sex-typing there is vertical occupational segregation. At higher levels of the occupational hierarchy lower proportions of women hold jobs. Also, many female jobs have limited career ladders (Fox & Barber, 1984), resulting in lower salaries.

The salary gap for women is decreasing, however. In 1986 full-time women worker's wages were up to 70% of men's, up from 62% in 1979 ("More Gains," 1987). The wage difference is attributed to women's interrupted careers, thus counteracting seniority and promotional opportunities. Even though women college graduates are currently occupying more managerial and professional high-income jobs than ever be-

fore, men are still twice as likely to enter the more highly-paid jobs. Some women do not seek a higher education because they know they may not be fully committed to a career due to family responsibilities (Davies, 1980). Time (Wallis, 1987) attributes the wage gap to an additional factor--outright sex discrimination. Companies get around the equal pay for equal or comparable work by inventing titles and altering job descriptions to make comparisons more difficult (Davidson & Cooper, 1982) and career paths more limited.

As women enter managerial positions the first stressors they often must battle are myths about themselves. Battling myths is a stressor for women workers as a group, however this thesis will discuss this stressor, as well as other stressors as they apply to women managers only. One myth they encounter is that men are intellectually more superior than women (Annstead, 1978). However, women outperform men on verbal aptitude, memory, and scholastic achievement tests.

Another myth is that men are more emotionally stable than women (Jewell, 1977). One reason for this perception arises from socially acceptable standards that allow women to express emotions, yet men are socially sanctioned when they become emotional. It has not been proven that women cry on the job more than men, and even if they do no one has proven that women's emotions affect performance either way (Annstead, 1978).

In addition, a common belief is that men value achievement, promotion, and careers more than women. No differences have been proven between men and women on this point. Working women can be just as committed to their careers as their male counterparts (Davidson & Cooper, 1982).

Another myth is that male coworkers will resent working with or for women (Jewell, 1977). There is no substantiation to this myth. However, it is true that men have to change and adjust traditional ways of relating to women, which may make some men uncomfortable.

Some people believe that married women's turnover and withdrawal rate is high because of pregnancy, their husbands' job transfers, marriage, or child-rearing. However, there is evidence that women managers are neither less dependable, nor have higher rates of job withdrawal, nor a large amount of time off due to illness (Breakwell, 1985). Women managers also do not quit their jobs every time they are pregnant, nor are they pregnant as often. Pregnancy is often planned as a result of birth control.

In addition to the hurdles myths cause women managers to overcome, and in addition to some of the same occupational stressors men have to face, women managers (and women in general) have other stressors of their own. For example, pregnancy and morning sickness can add stress to a woman's life. Additionally, women can suffer from Premenstrual Syndrome.

Women often have to justify their sexual behavior or marital status to others (Witkin-Lanoil, 1984). Women must deal continually with society's mixed messages: They are most often expected to be sexy, but not sexual; to have a child, but remain child-like; to be assertive, but not aggressive; to have a job, but not neglect home.

One of the major stressors women managers face on the job is that they are working in an environment created by men for men (Shaevitz, 1984). The work environment consists of different rules of behavior, customs and communication patterns than women are often accustomed to. Men are being forced to change, and the resentment and fear from having to change are at times directed towards women. Men may

support and sympathize with the women who may have pushed them to reconsider their beliefs and actions, but they also feel divided and uncertain, and at times they resist the changes occurring in their lives. They are caught, in other words, in the paradox of contemporary masculinity, suspended between the work in which they grew up and the one in which they must now live (p. 54).

A change in the nature of power and job status follows women's entry into the labor force, and men often react by de-individualizing women and looking at them as members of a category of people rather than as individuals (Breakwell,



1985). Men may set themselves in stereotyped role interactions (such as treating a female coworker or manager as his mother or pet) to minimize interaction with her. These role games will be discussed in more detail later in this thesis. It can safely be said that men often have a difficult time knowing how to interact with female leadership (Forbes, 1979). Women managers thus must deal with men's discomfort described, often causing the women additional stress. A woman manager's self-confidence may be decreased because of the lack of confidence, due to her sex, of those around her (Annstead, 1978).

De-individualization leads to sexual harassment and sexism. Forty-two percent of women in America have experienced some form of sexual harassment in the office (Davidson & Cooper, 1982). Women often have to deal with sexist language such as being called "girls" instead of "women" (Annstead, 1978). Sexism comes in many other forms:

1. Humiliating comments which portray women as sex objects.
2. Vulgar jokes which, if they protest, put women in a "spoil-sport" position, and if they do not object make them feel degraded.
3. Condescension and patronization by men, or intimidation by the tone of some men's voices when speaking to women.

4. Sexual innuendos and advances toward women, especially those who lack job security (Witkin-Lanoil, 1984). It seems women are in a "catch-22" situation: Stress increases when they are affected by sexism, and aggravated further when they have to fight it.

Another stressor women managers face includes the double standards that exist. A woman manager who is strong and assertive is often declared as pushy and aggressive. Conversely a weak and less assertive woman is accused of being meek and not tough enough to survive in the business world (Easton, Mills & Winoker, 1982). Leadership qualities for a man are often looked upon as hostility and aggression in a women (Annstead, 1978).

Attribution is often used as an additional double standard for women managers. Many people, including the woman herself, will attribute a woman's success to factors other than her skills and abilities. Her success will be attributed to luck or the ease of her job. Minor achievements may be looked upon as miraculous because of low original expectation (Jewell, 1977). Along these same lines women often need to work towards being perceived as being more competent than their male colleagues in order to succeed or be promoted (Larwood & Wood, 1979). At times they have to prove they can do the job for which they are to be promoted, while men are often promoted based on their perceived potential (Easton et

al., 1982).

However, blocked career development is most often due to the prejudices of career guidance and personnel managers, who do not present women for countless jobs for which they are qualified (Breakwell, 1985). Some women managers are blocked from promotions because it is assumed they are not transferable--their husbands will not move with them or let their wives move (Cooper, 1981). Others are steered into positions with low promotion opportunities (Davidson & Cooper, 1982).

Often women managers are not promoted because of the concern that they will disrupt the functioning of a unit. Besides the requisite change in the "old-boys' network", disruption may occur if her colleagues feel she was promoted due to EEO regulations. A woman manager's subordinates may not know whether she was promoted based on tokenism or credentials, and these subordinates may display resentment towards her as a result. The resentments can create difficulties for the woman manager in completing unit tasks and goals, resulting in stress (Davidson & Cooper, 1982). Similarly, if a woman manager is convinced that her accomplishments and promotions are due to the EEO goals she may feel as if she has been "fooling" people all along. She may not believe in her capabilities as a result (Easton et al., 1982).

Additionally, women managers who have been with their

organizations since before EEO may feel their achievements are being devalued by those new female managers promoted due to EEO guidelines, and the ensuing resentment may be expressed towards the new female managers. Person-environment misfit, and the resulting stress, can occur if someone is placed in a position only because of EEO goals.

EEO, however, combats tokenism. Katner (1977) suggested that if a category of people comprise less than 15% of a total group in an organization the group can be labelled as tokens and viewed as symbols rather than as individuals. These "symbols" have stressors associated with their "fishbowl" situation. Their minority status makes them conspicuous. They are often placed in highly visible roles where everyone is watching whether they will fail. Performance pressure thus increases. Women managers who are tokens may also feel other pressures, such as a feeling of isolation, the lack of female role models, distortion of their behavior, and the perception that they may be test cases for future women (Davidson & Cooper, 1982). Their work is often subjected to more scrutiny. Management consultants M. Hennig and A. Jardim (cited in Shaevitz, 1984, p. 31) say that "in order for a woman to make it in the business world she has to be more competent, more committed, more efficient, and more effective than any available man at her current job level, at the job above her, and at the job below." The fishbowl

allows for less room for error, resulting in more pressure (Jewell, 1977).

Lack of role models is another stressor for women managers. Men have the old-boys' network of communication and mentoring that guides men through promotions, company politics, and company information. Women managers often do not have enough representation in organizations to have this network. Therefore women managers are often not initiated into traditions or informal rules of the organization. Men watch other men. Women need this, too (Annstead, 1978).

Conversely, women managers are often not consulted or asked to participate in decision-making. Many times their ideas are not utilized or are not given credit (Crawford, 1977).

In general, according to Davidson and Cooper (1982), women and men managers name different high occupational stress factors. In their study, senior female managers find "lack of consultation/communication" as their highest stressor; senior male managers said they felt "underpromotion" caused them the most stress. Female middle managers stated that they feel they have to perform better at their job than colleagues of the opposite sex, and that this is a high stressor for them. In addition, female middle managers voice a career-related dilemma concerning whether they should start a family. Male middle managers felt that rate of pay

and "sacking" someone were their highest occupational stressors. Junior female managers named five high job stressors: "sex a disadvantage re job promotion/career prospects;" "office politics;" "career-related dilemma concerning whether to start a family;" "feeling undervalued;" and "unclear career prospects." Male junior managers named only three high occupational stressors: "disciplining subordinates," "sacking someone," and "underpromotion." Davidson and Cooper summarized that women managers in general experience more high stress factors than male managers.

Unfortunately,

Women who have made it as managers and executives have done so, most often, after a significant period of adjustment on the part of those around them, after proving their competence a little more than should be necessary, and after having set up effective personal relationships, which define them to their coworkers as individuals rather than as members of a sexual group (Annstead, 1978, p. 43).

Some of the major stressors women managers face occupationally are role-related which generate conflict. This subject is the focal point of the next chapter.

## Chapter V

### Women Managers' Role Conflict

A role is a set of expectations obtained from societal positions. These positions are frequently called status, which is a collectively recognized category for classifying people. Some positions are ascribed by society, based on personal attributes. These attributes are characteristics that affect people's expectations for those positions (Frieze et al., 1978).

Kahn et al. (cited in Frieze et al., 1978) define role conflict as any situation in which incompatible expectations are placed on a person. The conflict causes dilemmas because it compels people into breaching someone's expectations for them. A person exhibiting or feeling role conflict must either (a) choose to meet one expectation and disregard the others, (b) compromise by fulfilling a part of each expectation, or (c) avoid the choice among expectations.

Women have many roles which often conflict with one another. Over 90% of women marry, and over 90% of that group has children (Sherman & Denmark, 1978). Nearly 60% of all women with children under age 18 are working. Employed mothers of infants and preschoolers have the most conflict and worries (Kleiman, 1987). Novarra's (1980) work iden-

tified seven tasks which constitute women's work in Western society: (a) being in charge of the house, (b) bearing children, (c) preparing food, (d) ministering to the sick and frail, (e) clothing others, (f) educating young children, and (g) performing confidante and soother functions. Additionally, a study of 1500 women between the ages of 25 and 45 years old found women to be self-effacing. Only one-fifth of the respondents considered their first duty was to themselves (Marshall, 1984).

Few women give themselves permission to choose among their varied roles. Many women simply add roles to their repertoire instead of choosing among them. Many women try to be the perfect mother, the model wife, the best housekeeper, the greatest cook, the doting daughter, the helpful friend, and the hardest working employee. Women who attempt to fill all their perceived roles in this way are often called "superwomen" (Shaevitz, 1984). Many women try to assume superwoman status because they must continually confront society's mixed messages (Witkin-Lanoil, 1984). Society often depicts the woman's work at home and work outside the home as mutually exclusive (Epstein, 1970). Women often feel they must choose between working at home or having a career, and if they choose careers they feel they must also prove themselves at home as well. "They accept all the role expectations attached to their female status, feeling that to lack any is



to deny that they are feminine" (p. 32).

This chapter will review literature on women's role acquisition, woman manager's role conflicts, and dual career couples' role conflict management.

### Women's Role Acquisition

A number of theorists have attempted to explain the mechanisms underlying sex-role acquisition. Many theorists support the social learning model in explaining sex-role acquisition (Frieze et al., 1978). This model suggests that people learn sex-role behaviors based on whether they are positively rewarded for these behaviors. For example, young boys may be rewarded for doing well in school, while young girls are rewarded for cooking well. Parsons et al. (cited in Fox & Barber, 1984) suggested that parents have different expectations for their different-sexed children. Parents also have beliefs about what behaviors are appropriate for boys and girls. Maccoby and Jacklin (cited in Fox & Barber, 1984) found that parents and children feel parents respond differently to boy and girls. These expectations and beliefs are translated into rewards and punishments for sex-appropriate behavior.

Social learning theorists also use imitation or observational learning (modeling) as an explanation for sex-role acquisition. A child will model what is positively reinforced (Fox & Barber, 1984). For example, a child who plays

"house" will model his or her mother's or father's real life behavior in play. Modeling is also important in providing examples for children who do not want to mold themselves after traditional roles. Women who successfully combine both work and family roles identified with the occupational role models of their fathers, yet did not reject the feminine role models of their mothers (Hennig, 1971b). Both boys and girls have a more liberal view of their future roles if their mothers were employed, and saw the masculine role as less masculine and the feminine role as less feminine if the mother worked outside the home (Vogel et al., 1970). Additionally, in a study of 104 female parents who worked outside the home, mothers of the study participants served as a role model combining marriage and employment (Crawford, 1977).

The influence of the family of origin provides the first opportunity for sex/role learning. Mothers and fathers provide models and reinforce values, attitudes, and beliefs. For example, mothers often model a servant/service role in which they cook, clean, garden, shop, and chauffeur. Fathers model industrious behavior, such as working in an organization and protecting and providing for the family. Parents often reward girls for being verbal, softer, and quieter, and boys for being aggressive, stronger, and bolder (Fox & Barber, 1984). However, parents can provide important reinforcement when children deviate from the traditional mold.

In a study of women executives, all of them were never reinforced to accept either the female or male occupational career roles. Additionally, Hennig (1971a) found in her studies that women managers are comprised mostly of eldest or only children. She explains that this can be the result of the father encouraging the eldest or only child to adopt a "son's role."

Schools are another important institution that teach children appropriate sex roles. Schools often segregate and steer boys and girls into different classes, curriculums, and activities. For example, boys are steered into athletic and science courses and activities; girls are routed into English classes and activities such as cheerleading. School books often depict boys and girls in sex-typed behaviors and positions. Teachers interact more with boy students in instruction (Fox & Barber, 1984). Teachers are mostly female; academic administrators are male, denying girls successful female administrator models (Mackie & Pattullo, 1977).

The media reinforce the traditional family male-female roles. Television often portrays women as homemakers or in service occupations such as bartenders, maids or chefs. Additionally, television commercials often display women cooking, washing clothes, cleaning toilet bowls, and men taking out garbage or washing cars. Betty Friedan's (1983) survey of popular women's magazines over ten years found that

magazines often portray women who work outside the home as frustrated and unhappy until they find the "right man" and enter homemaking. The "Mary Tyler Moore" show depicts a frustrated single woman Mary Richards in her middle thirties, who with her roommate Rhoda are on a never-ending amount of dates looking for the perfect man to marry. Fortunately, current magazines have broadened their perspective on career women. In addition, the television networks currently run shows where women are successful lawyers ("L.A. Law") and policewomen ("Hill Street Blues").

Through parents, schools, peers and the media women are given many messages about appropriate behaviors and roles. Women are often trained to take care of everyone but themselves. As adults, therefore, they have a difficult time asking for help or delegating (Shaevitz, 1984). Young girls are taught to be keepers of family tradition, to perform mental health functions for their spouses and families, and to be collaborative not competitive. Additionally, girls are taught to express positive emotions openly, to suppress negative emotions, and to be passive not aggressive. A young girl is often taught to be a homemaker, mother and wife as her main role in life. Conversely, boys are often taught to be successful breadwinners (Epstein, 1970). Additionally, women are taught age-appropriate behaviors, such as to be married by their late twenties, or not to be an unmarried

mother. When a female tries to deviate from these role expectations she often is censored, ridiculed, denied, or discouraged by her family, peers, and other referent others (McLane, 1980). The fact that so many career women report inner conflict over what they were taught as children regarding sex-appropriate behavior indicates how strong a hold their childhood values, attitudes, and beliefs bind them (Levine-Shneidman & Levine, 1985).

#### Women Manager's Role Conflicts

Internally-imposed role conflicts. Women managers encounter many role conflicts at work, both internally and externally. Internally, women often battle between what they were taught as sex-appropriate behavior and what they believe their behaviors in the working environment should be. Many women managers exhibit this internal conflict through fear of success.

Women managers who fear success do so for a couple of reasons, according to most research. One reason they may avoid success is because they were taught success is not feminine. Success is not attractive and will make women conspicuous (Horner, 1970). Also, since many members of society do not expect as much success from women as they do from men, many women have low expectations for themselves and their abilities. They feel they have neither the skills nor capabilities to do the task. Many women managers sabotage

their possibilities for success in order to avoid social ostracism and failure.

It is interesting that men and women attribute their success and failure to different factors. When men fail they blame anyone or anything but themselves. Women blame their failures on their personal inadequacies. Conversely, men attribute their successes to their own skills, abilities, and talents. Women generally will credit their success to other people or other things such as luck, error, or the simplicity of the work, presumably to avoid ostracism (Breakwell, 1985).

The second reason women managers may avoid success is because they often feel that hard work is not rewarded by success. Some women whose parents told them to try to succeed often told them that it will not matter if they do succeed. For example, women may be encouraged to do well in school all the way through college, but once they graduate they are encouraged to get married and have children as opposed to starting a career. This type of attitude may make some women feel as if they are not in control of their own fate. In turn, women are often then prevented from organizing and planning their own lives and are taught to be dependent, a trait which is often carried over into the workforce if they choose to work. These women often feel they are dependent on others for their success or failure. Many successful women feel that even when they reach their highest

degree of independence they fear it. This has often been referred to as the "Cinderella complex." The proneness to dependence may make women more easily persuadable and less self-reliant, impeding their success (Witkin-Lanoil, 1984).

Many women managers, once they decide they want to pursue a career, often pursue a career that will not label them as deviant (Brooke, 1976). If a woman chooses a career that is not traditionally female, to be successful others feel she must adopt masculine traits, which are in turn also labelled as deviant. Some women are closed off from occupations because it is believed that women do not have the necessary traits that men do for the job (Frieze et al., 1978). Women have been taught to be dependent, supportive, passive, and emotional. Men have been taught to be aggressive, unemotional and independent, and these traits have been equated with success. Women have been attributed devalued traits, and men given valued traits (Brooke, 1976). If a woman adopts these sex-appropriate behaviors for men she is ostracized or called an "iron-maiden", a term used to denote any woman who suppresses her warmth in the business world (Forbes, 1979). But women often feel they need to portray these male attributes to be deemed successful. It is also interesting to note that "women seeking to be 'equal' to men in the world of work and public affairs will continually find themselves in conflict with men's traditional expectations of

femininity, and their interest in enforcing these" (Marshall, 1984, p. 37).

There is now a trend towards exhibiting the most effective traits in both male and female managers. The trend is towards a more nurturant leadership style of management, that is neither feminine nor masculine but androgenous (Kinzer, 1979). Androgenous behavior allows both females and males a wider range of permissible behavior. In a study by Davidson and Cooper (1982) women managers felt that in general they do not have to give up their feminine qualities as often as they did in the past to advance their careers.

Women managers often find internally imposed role conflicts through interactions with work peers, subordinates, and superiors. Male members of the workforce can try to make women assume roles and associated behaviors rather than allow her to be herself. Men may do this out of fear, as a reaction to the threat of women manager's success, or from the comfort in knowing how to relate to a woman manager in the roles men have been used to using around women (Forbes, 1979). Women often fall into these roles themselves because they are used to being in these roles, and have been taught how to play them. These roles are listed in Table 3 (Breakwell, 1985; Forbes, 1979). All these roles prevent women managers from attaining their full potential by suppressing true skills and abilities. A woman needs to disrupt these



Table 3

Roles Men and Women Use on the Job

Role	Role Description
Mother Earth (Female)	The one to whom men go with personal problems to seek advice and help
Pet (Female)	The mascot or decoration at meetings
Seductress (Female)	The sexual object; can lead to sexual harassment
Helpless Maiden (Female)	The incompetent one whom men need to help in order to feel power over her
"Bitch"/"Superbitch" (Female)	Believes the whole human race is against her
Queen Bee (Female)	The one who made it to the top on her own; as a result she will not help others to do the same.
Token Woman (Female)	One who represents all women; she is often there due to EEO regulations
Husband/Son/Father (Male)	Includes the use of a role at work they comfortably use at home
Joker (Male)	This man will do anything not to take a woman seriously--he perceives a woman as a threat
Invisible Man (Male)	Pretends the woman does not exist

rituals to regain control and remove the barriers to advancement these role represent.

Externally-imposed role conflicts. Working women find role conflicts between being a career woman and a homemaker (which includes being a wife, housekeeper, and mother).

Working mothers and homemakers have conflicts stemming from:

1. Society, friends, spouses, children, and at times the women themselves expecting the employed mother to do all the functions non-employed mothers do at home.
2. The realization that organized child-care is hard to find.
3. The fact that business organizations do not support the working parent through corporate policies.
4. The different traits required to do the different roles. At work women managers need to be androgenous, assertive and work-oriented; at home women need to be other-oriented, nurturant, and concerned about their children and spouses (Shaevitz, 1984).

What does a homemaker do? This is part of the problem. Housework is poorly defined, never ending, and tiring. One function a homemaker performs is providing for household members' physical and psychological needs, such as preparing food or teaching a child to read or play the piano (Shaevitz, 1984). Another function is to provide services and products for household members to use. Such products and services

include providing clothing (whether purchased or made), chauffeuring to school functions, and food shopping. Homemakers are also responsible for keeping the home up to the standards expected by culture, class, and community. Functions called for here include washing dishes, dusting, doing laundry, and washing windows. Additionally, homemakers organize the functions that others do within and for the household, such as planning the menu and meeting home-repair people. Overall, it is difficult to specifically describe job components for homemakers.

Unfortunately, women managers still do the majority of housework and child-rearing, although men will do slightly more housework if the woman works outside the home than if she is not employed (Shaevitz, 1984). The average time a woman spends on housework each day if the woman is not employed outside the home is 11 hours and 6 minutes. If she works outside the home average time per day spent on housework is 8 hours and 45 minutes. Men usually spend no more than 1-1/2 hours per day on those same chores. In extreme cases, therefore, career women may have to work 16 hours in a day, 7 days a week without interruption when combining work inside and outside the home (Levi, 1981). The problem is compounded for divorced or widowed women who work outside the home and who do not have husbands to help. There are existing double standards for divorced or widowed men who must

keep up the home or raise children. Divorced or widowed men are often congratulated for the same job they do with the house and kids that women are expected to do. Cleanliness standards society holds for divorced/widowed men are usually lower than those for divorced/widowed women (Levi, 1981).

There appear to be four different types of husbands:

1. Those who are traditional and do not help around the house (39%).
2. Those who believe that in theory they should help, but do not (33%).
3. Those who help somewhat (15%).
4. Those who regularly perform household work and have little conflict doing so (13%) (Shaevitz, 1984).

Part of the reason men do not assume more household responsibilities is that they were not taught how to do so as they were growing up. Another component is that society has previously dictated that the man is responsible for providing income and other resources for his family, and for providing for the status of the family (Brooke, 1976). If a wife is employed outside the home it may threaten the male's status both inside and outside the family, especially if he has to perform devalued (by society's standards) household duties.

Homemaking does not have the glamour it used to. Being a homemaker means being economically dependent on one's spouse in a society where money is rewarded. Being an unpaid

worker undermines the status of the homemaker in society (Fox & Barber, 1984). Before the 1970's prejudice existed against women who were employed outside the home; but today the reverse is found. Prejudice exists against women who do not work outside the home. However, if a woman is employed outside the home she is still often responsible for keeping up the home to traditional standards (Shaevitz, 1984). Herein lies the conflict. Mothers who are employed often worry that their spouses, house, and children are being cheated of time, and they try to make it up to them by performing all the functions traditional homemakers do, and feel guilty if they do not (Epstein, 1970).

Additionally, a wife's income is often seen as a supplement to her husband's earnings, which are considered the primary wages. She often also needs his permission to work. In a Time Magazine survey (Wallis, 1987) 84% of the people surveyed felt that if someone had to give up a job for some reason, it would be the wife's. Conflict can also arise for both husband and wife if the wife makes more money or holds a higher level position.

Women managers have additional conflicts specifically relating to the child-care component of homemaking. They need to confront the popular myth that women make better mothers if they are at home (Marshall, 1984). Women often believe this and feel they are neglecting their children if

they themselves work outside the home (Cooper & Marshall, 1977). Women respond to this conflict with three basic child-rearing models (Shaevitz, 1984). The first model is the dropout model, where one parent, usually the mother, drops out of the full-time workforce to care for the children. The dropout can be for a specific time, such as until the kids start school, or until they are grown and married. Some women work part-time instead of full-time. However, this model interrupts a woman's career progression and income potential. It also decreases a woman's life satisfaction. Marital satisfaction declines for women with the beginning of child-bearing, and increases until children leave home (Brooke, 1976). Young wives without children are the happiest. When children grow up and leave home mothers describe themselves as more satisfied with life (Sherman & Denmark, 1978).

Another model used by working couples is the shared parenting model where parents rearrange their work schedules so that child care is shared and provided for. This model is especially hard to make work since many employers have neither adopted flex-time scheduling nor paternity leaves as policy.

Third, substitute care while both parents work full time is an increasingly popular model for childcare. In 1986 nine million preschoolers had substitute care (Wallis,

1987). The expense of childcare also can be prohibitive. Daycare often costs over \$100 per week, which often forces parents to put their children into less than adequate substitute care.

Substitute care often results in women and men feeling guilty about not spending enough time with their children. In a survey reported done in Time (Wallis, 1987) 57% of those surveyed felt that women working outside the home is bad for children. However, in a nationwide survey, children of mothers employed outside the home were found to be more independent and self-reliant than non-employed mothers' children (Easton et al., 1982). Employed mothers may also have children with greater achievement and self-esteem (Brooke, 1976).

The absence of organizational policies to help parents, especially employed mothers, to cope with the home and work role conflicts is obvious. Only 40% of women get maternity leave with job protection (Wallis, 1987), and paternity leave is rarely given. Often these leaves for either parent are unpaid and short. Organizations also do not allow for a transition from full-time to part-time work or flex-time work schedules to work around the needs of children.

The last major role conflict women managers may have regarding working inside and outside the home is that different traits are required to do the jobs. Many women find that how they are at work--competent, unsentimental, asser-

tive--often is not viable with the family or the social self (Marshall, 1984). Many women adjust to this by being two types of people--one type at work, and then another at home or socially. This adaptation and changing between one set of traits and another as needed can be particularly stressful for a woman.

In general, it seems that neither the career nor the homemaker role has complete acceptance from American culture (Brooke, 1976). Women managers are freer to combine both roles with less sanctions than if she assumes either role full-time. However, combining roles seems to add conflict because she is not allowed to compromise either role, but must maintain the standards set by society for each role.

It is interesting that married men who are managers use their wives to contribute to their success and prestige (Kinzer, 1979). The contribution from a wife is usually in the form of professional support--she goes to his business social functions, does household chores and management for him, relocates for him and manages the household while he travels on business. Most married, employed women managers do not receive the reciprocal support back from their husbands. He may go to business social functions with her, but the household chores wait for her until she comes home from work or from travels on business. Often a man will not relocate if his spouse's job call for it. What a woman manager



often needs is a "wife" at home (Epstein, 1970)! One study found that marriage is a stress-producer for women because of their new household management roles, and a stress-reducer for males (Kinzer, 1979).

Horner (1970) found that career women usually marry men who have strong egos and images of themselves, are not threatened by their wife's success, and therefore can be proud of their wife's accomplishments. These women usually are part of a dual career marriage.

#### Dual Career Couple's Role Conflicts

Dual career usually constitutes a family structure where both husband and wife pursue active professional careers as well as active, involved family lives (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1978). Dual career families run into many role conflicts. For example, in organizations the demand for success usually involves heavy work commitment during the early stages of one's career. This is usually the time a family is beginning to be established (Wallace, 1982). Dual career couples often find this to cause conflict. Additionally, competition between dual career couples can cause conflict, as can sheer overload, childcare activities, housework, social activities, and each other's job activities. With regard to social activities, dual career couples do not have time to socialize during the week. Weekends and vacations are often used as catch-up times for housework (Mar-

shall, 1984). Conflict in social activities also arises over whose relatives or friends to visit.

Work conflict arises over the demands placed on each partner from his or her respective jobs. An example would be if both have to travel for business the same day. In this case who will care for the children and the home? Also, when weighing job transfers, career and salary potential of each partner must be weighed before a move is made, and this can cause stress and conflict.

Men's attitudes regarding dual career role conflicts have been slow to change, often causing career women to divorce their husbands or not to marry at all (Cooper, 1981). Women managers in dual career marriages also report marital conflict over their partner's inability to give them support. Woods (cited in Annstead, 1978) found that in the absence of support from significant others, women's multiple role management has a deleterious effect on their mental health. To support these contentions, a number of studies have found low rates of marriage and high rates of divorce among women who possess a high education level, high commitment to their careers, and high earnings (Nelson & Quick, 1985).

According to Rapoport and Rapoport (1978) dual career couples usually adopt one of four role structures: the accommodators, adversaries, allies, or acrobats. Accommodators have one partner taking primary (but not total) re-

sponsibility for home and family roles, while the other assumes major responsibility for a career. With adversaries, both partners are highly involved with their careers and minimally involved with home and children (if there are any). Conflict arises when neither partner is willing to assume sacrifice for the other, the home, or the children. Allies include couples who are either both highly involved with their careers, or with home roles, but not with both. Acrobats try to fulfill all role expectations. The stresses in this type of couple are inherent in having very little time spent nourishing the relationship, and also in the little relaxation time. The greatest amount of stress would be associated with the acrobat, who is juggling many roles, according to Rapoport and Rapoport (1978). Accommodators are collaborators who seem to have the least amount of role conflict and stress.

Hall (1972) identified three types of coping strategies for the role conflict inherent in dual career couples. Structural role redefinition includes negotiating roles with senders to make them compatible with other responsibilities. Personal reorientation involves changing one's own attitude regarding various roles and prioritizing them as to which one is personally important. An example would be partitioning roles or ignoring others. Reactive role behavior is accepting role demands as they occur or as given and finding ways

to meet them. Hall (1972) found that satisfaction with career was positively related to structural role redefinition and negatively related to reactive role behavior. Personal reorientation was not found to be significantly related to career satisfaction.

A new type of career-style has evolved for dual career couples--the protean couple relationship (Cooper & Payne, 1980). Protean couples make up their own rules as to how to cope with their roles. Protean couples might live apart on weekdays to pursue separate career options, or might alternate whose career takes priority at any given time. Generally protean career couples feel less role overlap, more control, more predictability and reduced conflict.

Women managers, and women in general, are finding less resistance to having careers of their own. However, it will take a while to erase long standing societal expectations of women. Employed women managers will need to learn to manage the stress that role conflict causes while they find an acceptable niche within society and organizations.

## Chapter VI

### Stress Management and Stress Reduction Techniques, and an Agenda for Future Research

Many stress reduction and management techniques have been proposed for occupational stress. Some are specific to woman manager's stressors. There is very little research showing any one of these techniques to be effective. This chapter describes and critiques stress management and stress reduction techniques.

Individual stress management and reduction techniques can be classified in three ways: (a) attempts to change the response to the stressor, (b) attempts to remove the stressor, and (c) attempts to change the person to be better able to cope with the stressor (Lazarus & Launier, 1981). Each of these classifications will be incorporated into a discussion on individually-oriented stress management/reduction techniques. Organizationally-oriented techniques will also be presented.

#### Individually-Oriented Stress Management/Reduction Techniques

People attempt to change their response to stressors in many ways. Attempts at changing the response to the stressor include techniques that aim at preventing or reacting to a specific stressor. These skills include progressive relaxa-

tion, biofeedback, time management, yoga, and hypnosis. An organization may want to include any or all of these programs as part of its stress management program. The cost of maintaining these programs on a regular basis is something to consider. On the other hand, these programs' techniques can provide benefits which could outweigh the cost.

Progressive relaxation is a techniques whose objective is to achieve a complete state of relaxation. Total muscle relaxation is aimed for by progressively relaxing each muscle group one at a time. The individual lies in a comfortable position and breathes slowly and deeply. The trainer, and ultimately the individual person, will concentrate on progressively relaxing muscles throughout the body so that there is no noticeable tension. Usually one starts with the muscles of the feet and works up with muscle groups through the arms to the scalp. Muscle groups are held taught for a short period of time and then rapidly released. Each muscle group is tightened and released two or three times. This helps to gain a greater feeling of muscle relaxation. When all muscle groups are worked through the individual should be in a complete state of relaxation. Eventually muscle tension sessions at the beginning of each muscle group can be eliminated so that the person can go into a complete state of relaxation very quickly with little or no effort. This type of relaxation has obvious health benefits by helping to keep the body

calmer during stressful periods.

Biofeedback involves instrumentation which can measure minute changes in a body's internal activities. Individuals can use these machines to learn about and control bodily functions which were once presumed to be involuntary (Goldberg, 1978). In a business setting many firms have invested in biofeedback machines to help train employees to control muscle tension or blood pressure. The equipment monitors heart beat, muscle tension, and skin temperature by communicating to the individual with lights. The individual learns to control his or her responses by getting feedback from the computer in terms of its communications mechanisms as to what is an optimal level of muscle tension. The major drawback of biofeedback is the cost of the equipment.

Transcendental meditation (TM) is receiving increasing attention and acceptance (Goldberg, 1978). It is a simple mental practice handed down from ancient Indians. It involves the use of a meaningless sound called a mantra, assigned to the individual by the trainer. Use of this mantra quiets the mind, yet maintains alertness. The body's metabolic functions move towards a deep state of rest resulting in a deep state of relaxation.

Use of TM has been associated with decreased anxiety and depression; increased creativity, memory and perception; and better stress response (Goldberg, 1978). McLean (1974)

also reported that TM is useful in handling stress.

Many people feel stressed when they have too much work to do and too little time to get it done. They can benefit from developing some basic time management skills. Time management training teaches how to say "no" to unwanted or unnecessary invitations and requests, which are a frequent cause of stress. Learning how to prioritize tasks to get the important things done can be another great stress reducer.

People attempt to remove stressors from their lives in many ways. Some people achieve an escape from stress through hobbies, time alone for self-reflection, walking, and taking breaks. Some people find it helpful to avoid unnecessary contact with people who cause conflict situations, to reduce interpersonal conflict (Goldberg, 1978). Withdrawing temporarily from a stressful situation to allow some room to think and plan a strategy can be a release. Withdrawal behaviors include being absent or terminating from a job. Gupta and Beehr (1979) reported that job stress is associated with employee withdrawal behaviors, such as absenteeism and turnover. In so far as possible, employees should try to choose the kind of environment that suits their personalities, a work setting in which they feel comfortable (Lazarus, 1966). If they are not placed in the right position, they should be encouraged to leave it.

Changing one's lifestyle so it is more balanced is



important as well. Ideally, one should all have a balance between time spent in work, home-related, leisure, social, and religious activities. Success in one area can help balance stress in another.

Attempts to change the person to be better able to cope with stressors include changing the body and changing one's outlook/philosophy on life. Altering the body involves making it more resilient and having its weak points strengthened. This can be achieved through exercise and good diet. The benefits of regular exercise and good nutrition are popular topics of conversation today. Advantages that have been associated with regular exercise include a greater ability to concentrate, reduced risk of heart attack, higher energy, a firmer appearance, reduced tension, increased immune response, and body weight management (Goldberg, 1978). Exercise accomplishes reduced tension because it releases muscle tension as opposed to storing fight-or-flight responses. It also tends to calm muscles after exertion. Since exercise builds up endurance, it helps resist disease. McLean (1974) found that physical activity and exercise help make a person better able to handle stress.

Proper nutrients are essential in stress management as well. Stress depletes certain nutrients (Selye, 1976), while substances such as caffeine or sugar may diminish one's ability to tolerate stress.

The last strategy for managing stress through changing the person is based on the idea that it is not always the event in the external world that produces stress, but rather it is often one's own way of perceiving it that is disturbing.

The approach called upon here is one which changes personal attitudes, expectations, and philosophies. This may include cognitive rethinking of faulty thinking patterns to cause less anxiety. Cognitive restructuring includes techniques such as, thought-stopping, rethinking, mental diversion, and mental rehearsal (Albrecht, 1979).

#### Organizationally-Oriented Stress Management/Reduction Techniques

It is hard to identify specific organization-wide stress coping methods for two reasons. One reason is due to the inter- and intra-organizational differences in causes of stress that makes diagnosing stress, and more importantly, implementing stress management programs so difficult. Also, the literature is very scarce on stress management techniques at the organization level because this is a relatively new concept. Some suggestions for stress management will be presented here for organizations. These suggestions have received some support in literature.

Specifically, in order to help eliminate role ambiguity and conflict in individual's role in the organization,

job descriptions, organizational expectations, and superiors', subordinates', and coworkers' expectations should be clearly delineated and task-oriented. A management by objectives system might be set up where the organizational goals strived for, the means to get there, standards of measurement, and provision for specific feedback are provided to help minimize ambiguity. Formal authority lines should be clearly specified in an organizational chart, and the authority given to a position should be recognized by all to help clear up any uncertainty. Much of this relies on the use of good communication, formally and informally, to pass along expectations.

Women managers who are suffering from role conflict may want to utilize not only the aforementioned techniques, but reduce role conflict by asking others to clarify roles. They may also want to hire outside help to take care of children and help with household chores. Assigning chores may help in household management (Shaevitz, 1984).

Matching a person to the job also helps in defining and minimizing conflict. In an employment interview the prospective employee should be given all of the necessary information about the job to minimize expectation discrepancies, and to help the individual make the right decision about whether he or she is really suited for the job and could be satisfied with it. A career path plan should also be delineated. This

information can help in defining the job and in minimizing self-perceived inadequacies when pressures begin to mount.

To help reduce understimulation or overstimulation different job designs can be utilized to balance out the proper work loads and characteristics. The type of job design to be used depends on the organization, the workers, and their mutual needs. In general, however, workers planning a design with management can increase its acceptance and minimize the potential resistance associated with a change, if one is called for.

Enhancing social interaction on the job where it is lacking can be accomplished by stressing the important combination of technological elements of the job and the social networks among those who perform the job tasks through, possibly, a sociotechnical system (Levi, 1967). This type of system can utilize employee contributions in setting up a work environment for an optimal amount of social interaction, group autonomy and responsibility, and overall job design; thus applying the concepts of employee participation in job design to enhance commitment.

Better social interaction can also involve placing similar individuals into cohesive groups to help minimize interpersonal conflict. Management should also find out employee needs in terms of management style so that better employee-management relations can occur. Perhaps the indi-

vidual can be made aware of the management style of the organization or future superior during the employment interview. Strengthening interpersonal bonds and contact can also help to minimize ambiguity and conflict because expectations can be exchanged with others, thus reducing ambiguity. Women managers may want to develop supportive social networks and relationships with other working mothers.

Another stress management suggestion for organizations relates to managing change. Managers should be taught to analyze their own reasons for resistance to change, and should learn what to look for in subordinates. Resistance can come from uncertainty, insecurity, organizational politics, misunderstandings, or misinformation. Some suggestions on ways to deal with resistance to change include communication through education, using participation as a change commitment technique, facilitation and support, and negotiations (Goldberg, 1978). Change should be initiated gradually until a greater commitment and understanding from employees occurs. Employees should be allowed to express feelings concerning proposed changes (Forbes, 1979).

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP's) lead to reduced organizational costs and improved employee performance and reliability (McGaffey, 1978). Costs are reduced because the typical EAP expenses are far outweighed by medical costs that might have been incurred had a person gone to a medical fa-

cility. It is estimated that over 1200 companies are developing EAP's (McGaffey, 1978; Yates, 1979). EAP's provide psychological treatment, alcohol and drug abuse programs, crisis interventions, advisory and consultative services, and referrals.

Organizations need to help women managers with their unique stressors. First, organizations may need to portray people as people, not a male or females. Similarly, an organization may want to have its management staff attend seminars on combatting myths and stereotypes, and may want to have women managers take classes on how to deal with these myths and stereotypes that do not portray women in a favorable light.

Companies may adopt policy changes to accommodate women managers and dual career couples. They may want to assign credit for work histories so that women and men are not penalized for leaves of absence due to child-bearing or child-rearing. Longer maternity/paternity leave with job security is needed. Companies may also want to offer day care services or reimbursements. Other accommodations to women or dual career couples include: flex-time or part-time schedules; more flexible and long-range career patterns that take into account work cycles; not tying in promotions with mobility; allowing women (especially new mothers) to work at home; job-sharing; shorter work hours; providing mentors; and

setting up support structures for transfers and relocations.

Although preventative health management will cost money, the cost may be offset by the expenses involved in recruiting, training, and replacing people lost due to stress and stress consequences.

Unfortunately, the research on the effectiveness of stress management and reduction techniques discussed in this chapter is inconclusive. Newman and Beehr (1979) reviewed 21 studies on stress management and reduction techniques and found all of the studies reviewed to be either poor in design or having evidence which was inconclusive. Much future research needs to be done on the effectiveness of stress management and reduction techniques.

The quantitative and qualitative research relating to occupational and other types of stress is scarce. Even more barren is research relating to women's occupational stress. There have been many factors, some of which are interacting, which have been associated with managerial stress. However, there is no integrated conceptual framework in the field of managerial stress. Such a framework is badly needed.

Particularly, research needs to be done on the stress process--the causes of stress; how stress is manifested; individual vulnerabilities that predispose people to suffer stress consequences; and the relationships that exist between specific stressors and specific symptoms. Attention should

be addressed to relationships among various chronic diseases as they relate to stress. Along these same lines research needs to clarify how to define and measure stress.

Pertaining to women managers' stress, more research needs to be performed on unique female stressors--what they are and by what mechanisms they operate. Other research areas called for with regards to women managers' occupational stress include: the effects of occupational segregation; factors that influence women's commitment to work; female managers' effectiveness; role conflict coping techniques; the effect of women's attribution and expectations on their behavior and cognitions; barriers to women's achievements; effective managerial training for women (including whether same-sex training would be more effective); whether mentoring helps women in their career path; whether women's support groups have any mitigating effects on stress reduction; and the actual consequences of role conflict.

With increased complexity and changes in the environment and in organizations, occupational stress has become an important issue. As reviewed in this thesis the human consequences of stress have been related to mental and physical illness. Not only do these consequences manifest themselves in human costs, but organizational costs are greatly affected as well. As a result a framework is needed that teaches people to prevent stress and manage it when it occurs, both



on the individual and organizational levels. There is not a single formula or point of intervention that effectively manages stress for all people in all organizations and in all situations. But by effectively identifying the causes and process of stress, and then finding points of intervention, organizations can hope to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of managers and other workers.

With the increased numbers of employed women managers stress research needs a new additional focus. Women's morbidity has been rising and is partially attributed to their entering the labor market in larger numbers. Additionally, women have specific stressors that seem to be related to their gender which need to be addressed and managed. In particular, role conflict in its various forms needs more research and understanding so that women managers can have more effective careers. Not only might this help women's life satisfaction, but it also would help organizations more effectively utilize the human resource of women managers.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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